

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
STREAM SURVEY

FILE FORM NO.....

NAME...James Creek.....COUNTY...Mendocino.....
STREAM SECTION...Entire... FROM...Origin.....TO...Mouth.....LENGTH.....6..miles
TRIBUTARY To...North Fork Big River.....TWP...17N..R...15WSEC...10-11
OTHER NAMES.....None.....RIVER SYSTEM...Big River...
NAME OF SURVEYORJim Morehouse.....DATE...November 30, 1958
SOURCES OF DATA.....Personal observations, Dept of Forestry personnel in Ft. Bragg.....

EXTENT OF OBSERVATION: This tributary was walked out from the headwaters downstream to the mouth on Nov. 30, 1958 by Jim Morehouse.

LOCATION – Heads in the Jackson State Forest, flows south and enters the North Fork Big River approximately 2 miles east of Dunlap.

RELATION TO OTHER WATERS – One of many tributaries in the Big River drainage that serves as a spawning area for anadromous fishlife. In its present condition, it has relatively minor fisheries value.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: WATERSHED and IMMEDIATE DRAINAGE BASIN –James Creek begins at a point just below Highway 20 and runs westerly down a fairly steep grade approximately one mile . Here it turns southwest just below the first tributary, and continues at a more gradual descent to its mouth. The overall creek bed is a V-type scoured canyon. The riparian growth to just below the first tributary is as follows, and in order of abundance: horsetail, bullrush, willow, thistle, fern and redwood. The prominent plants of the remainder of the stream are redwood, bay and laurel trees. Blackberry, manzanita, and ceonothus occur on occasion throughout. The first mile of creek to below the first tributary is definitely headwaters. A small permanent flow from springs goes underground and reappears several times. The beginning 300-500 ft. of creedbed probably flows only during or following rainfall. This extreme upper area drains the Highway 20 earth-fill, and seems to contribute considerable silt to the stream. Description of tributary mouths in downstream order as they appear on sketch map:

1. Very small, dry, mud botom.
2. Small, one or two gpm, mud gravel bottom, heavy logging pollution.
3. Small, negligible flow, mud bottom, heavy logging pollution.
4. Mouth completely filled with logs and stumps. A road has been built across the stream.
5. Main tributary, ¼ c.f.s. rubble, gravel, mud bottom, very heavy logging pollution.
6. Small, 3-5 gpm, bedrock steps, clean.
7. Not seen.

ALTITUDE –350 to 1050 ft.

GRADIENT – Fairly steep in the headwaters, moderate in mid- and lower sections.

WIDTH – Average 10 feet. (1 to 40 ft).

DEPTH – Average 3 inches (1/2 – 5 in).

FLOW – Average ¼to 2 c.f.s., range 0 to 4 c.f.s..

VELOCITY – Sluggish to cascading. Rapid throughout most of section.

BOTTOM– Mostly mud-gravel bottom. It was probably poor to good gravel before logging operations and road building.

SPAWNING AREAS – In my opinion it is all poor because of siltation and logging debris. Those spawning areas present, are probably inaccessible to fish because of existing barriers.

POOLS – Common to scarce. Ranging from 3' wide by 1' deep to 30' wide by 4' deep. Average 7' wide by 2 ft' deep.

SHELTER – Mostly excellent. A few poor areas due to logging or road building operations.

BARRIERS – The stream is filled with log-debris jams. There is not a 100-ft. section of the streambed that is free of logs. Trees and slash actually fill the streambed for a considerable distance. See attached sketch map for barrier breakdown.

DIVERSIONS – An abandoned water storage box, 10 ft. x 3 ft. x 3 ft., is located at the very head of the creek. No other diversions noted.

TEMPERATURE –

FOOD – Present.

AQUATIC PLANTS – Scirpus and Equisetum are the only near aquatic plants.

WINTER CONDITIONS – From high water marks and log position it is believed that winter runoff flows are moderate and of short duration.

POLLUTION – The silt present in the streambed through the entire stream section is at the saturation point. There is no part of it that cannot be defined as heavily silted. Stream side roads and logging seem to be the cause.

SPRINGS –

FISHES PRESENT AND SUCCESS – Very small fish averaging 1-2 inches, believed to be salmonids, were observed in pools. Identification was doubtful because visibility conditions hampered by nightfall.

OTHER VERTEBRATES –

FISHING INTENSITY – In all probability none.

OTHER RECREATIONAL USE – None known.

ACCESSIBILITY – Access along the stream is difficult in winter. A logging road which parallels most of the stream provides access during the summer months.

OWNERSHIP – The majority of this stream drainage is located within the Jackson State Forest.

POSTED OR OPEN – No posted areas observed.

IMPROVEMENTS – See recommendations.

PAST STOCKING – None known.

GENERAL ESTIMATE – In its natural state, this tributary is reported to have supported good runs of silver salmon and steelhead (Elwell). In its present state the stream is considered to have little value to fishlife (Elwell).

RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT – I do not recommend any management or rehabilitation of this creek because the removal of the major log jams in the streambed would be a monumental feat and the silting would still remain as a limiting factor. However the present logging company should be required to clean up their existing mess and practice better logging methods in the future (Morehouse).

SKETCH MAP: (See attached)

REFERENCES AND MAPS - Mendocino County CDF 1948

Elwell:cd

12-24-58

(Handwritten on bottom)

Division of Forestry is removing all debris from stream prior to issuing logging contract during 1959. Every attempt should be made to preserve this (Elwell)